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Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

## **Effects of the CLIL Approach in Oral Production of English Students in the Second Year of the United General Baccalaureate at a High School in Cuenca, Ecuador**

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Master of Linguistics Applied to Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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**Resumen:**

La necesidad de promover la producción oral de una segunda lengua ha creado la necesidad imperativa de analizar y explorar nuevos métodos y técnicas de enseñanza con el fin de desarrollar las destrezas de la comunicación oral en la lengua meta. Este estudio investiga el efecto del Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE) en la producción oral de un lenguaje extranjero en los estudiantes ecuatorianos de segundo año de Bachillerato General Unificado (BGU). Este estudio fue llevado a cabo empleando una clase de segundo de bachillerato. Un total de 22 estudiantes participaron en este estudio. Con el propósito de recopilar datos, se empleó un método cuantitativo, lo cual permitió al investigador realizar pruebas estadísticas y determinar el impacto del tratamiento. Los participantes del estudio tomaron parte de una prueba previa para determinar su nivel de competencia en sus habilidades orales. Después de tres meses de aplicación del método AICLE los estudiantes tomaron parte de una prueba posterior y los resultados fueron comparados con el fin de medir el efecto del método AICLE. Además cada AICLE clase fue documentada y con el propósito de investigar las opiniones de los estudiantes hacia el método AICLE una encuesta fue aplicada, una al principio del estudio y otro al final. Los resultados de esta investigación revelan la efectividad de AICLE en la producción oral de los estudiantes comparado con la educación tradicional de un lenguaje, donde los principios básicos del AICLE no están presentes. Al mismo tiempo los estudiantes expresaron opiniones positivas hacia el nuevo método.

**Palabras claves:** AICLE enfoque, producción oral, segundo lenguaje, destrezas comunicativas



## **Abstract:**

The necessity to foster second language oral production has created the imperative need to analyze and explore new teaching methods and techniques in order to develop oral communication skills in the target language. This study investigated the effect of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in foreign language oral production of Ecuadorian English language learners of United General Baccalaureate (BGU). This study was carried out using one class of second of baccalaureate. A total of 22 study participants took part in this research. In order to gather data, a quantitative method was employed, which allowed the researcher to perform statistical tests and determine the impact of the treatment. The study participants took part of a pre-test to determine their level of proficiency in their speaking skills. After three months of the CLIL intervention they took a post-test and the results were compared to measure the effect of CLIL approach. In addition, every single CLIL lesson was documented, and with the aim of to investigate the students' opinions to the CLIL approach a survey was applied, one at the beginning of the study and another at the end. The findings of this research reveal the effectiveness of CLIL in students' oral production compared with the traditional learning instruction, where the basic principles of CLIL are not presented. At the same time the learners expressed positive opinions towards the new approach.

**Keywords:** CLIL approach, oral production, second language, speaking skills

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## 1. Introduction

In today's world most of the educational systems give considerably importance to the teaching of a foreign language; it becomes an essential instrument in general education which allows people to get access to a globalized world. Within this context, one of the challenges for most foreign language teachers is to provide learners with the appropriate conditions that allow them to enhance their oral production. Li (2003) states that speaking is a skill that is hard to develop in most of the foreign language learners. In this sense, the author mentions that students are able to read literature works in the foreign language but they are not able to communicate orally efficiently. There are some elements that contribute to this issue for example: anxiety around speaking, social and cultural factors, the lack of an appropriate methodology, among others. In this way, there is a necessity to create and explore new teaching methodologies that enhance learners' competence in the language of instruction.

Content language integrated learning (CLIL) becomes an alternative to develop foreign language speaking skills, by means of this approach an additional language is used as an instrument to learn the content of an area of learning and the language of instruction (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh. 2010). According to Naves (2010), several CLIL programs have been subject of research, these studies have proved that the CLIL approach offers the appropriate conditions for a naturalistic language learning since the language learners have the opportunity to acquire the target language through interactive contexts, which are similar to those present in first-language acquisition. There have been several research studies about the effectiveness of CLIL programs as an innovative teaching methodology in the last years (Dalton, 2008; Zafiri, 2016; Merino & Lasagabaster, 2017; Nikula, 2010;

Gallardo & Gómez, 2013). In general, all these studies reveal positive effects of CLIL on student's oral performance in the foreign language. For instance, Dalton (2008) reports that if learners are exposed to more hours of CLIL input, they will be better communicators in terms of quantity, creativity as well as risk-taking.

In the same line, a study carried out by Zafiri (2016) demonstrates how CLIL promotes speaking skills more effectively than the traditional methods of teaching English. According to Michel, Cater, and Varela (2009), traditional teaching is based on a unilateral transmission of knowledge from teachers to passive learners; in this type of teaching, students learn most of the lesson content just by listening. This study was performed using two groups of 15 learners for two months. One was a Non-CLIL group (control group), and the second group worked with CLIL approach (experimental group). In order to gather data concerning oral production, quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. In order to examine learners' oral production; researchers pay attention to pronunciation, intonation, grammar, fluency, cohesion and coherence. The findings showed that Non-CLIL learners had 0% variation in their grades. On the contrary, learners who participated in the CLIL program had a better performance in their grades. CLIL students improved in the development of the speaking skill compared with Non-CLIL ones. In the same way, the data gathered by the learners' questionnaire revealed a positive attitude toward CLIL approach.

Another study which supports the benefits of CLIL was carried out by Merino and Lasagabaster (2017), and its aim was to determine the performance of learners in general language skills performance. Consequently, the students were immersed in a certain

number of CLIL sessions. The findings show that the amount of CLIL hours in a group of learners influences significantly in their second language acquisition.

Lastly, a study developed by Gallardo and Gómez (2013) tested the effectiveness of additional CLIL exposure on the oral production of secondary school learners of English as a Foreign Language. CLIL learners, who had received a 30% increase in exposure by means of using English as a language of instruction, were compared to mainstream English students in a story-telling task. Results revealed that CLIL learners had better performance regarding fluency, lexis, and grammar. Besides, CLIL students had a huge range of additional vocabulary which was tested by the total number of words they were able to use at the moment of producing fluent narrations. This study revealed the advantages of additional CLIL exposure on oral English production.

### **The four Cs of CLIL**

The CLIL approach has been incorporated into the curriculum of different educational institutions around the world. Although in the Ecuadorian educational system this approach is fairly new, it is imperative to know in depth each one of the components of a CLIL lesson. Lesca (2012) points out that at the moment of incorporating the CLIL approach in the teaching learning process, it becomes essential to incorporate activities based on its four main components. In this way, the 4Cs (content, culture, communication, and cognition) need to be understood by both teachers and learners before it is implemented in the classroom. Each one of the Cs are explained as follows:

Regarding the Content component, it is the first element of the CLIL approach as well as the first stage of the planning process. Coyle (2005) explains that it is important to



understand planning by taking into account two different perspectives: the teaching objectives and the learning outcomes. Teaching aims refer to what the teacher tries or plans to do. On the contrary, the learning outcomes emphasize on what the learners would be able to do at the end of a specific lesson. It is imperative to be clear and understand these two aspects of content since they allow both teachers and learners to know what they are going to learn in a specific way.

The next component of CLIL refers to Communication which emphasizes the idea that learning a language is supported by communication. Consequently, within the CLIL approach, student -student, student-group, and group-group communication should be implemented in the classroom. On the other hand, within a CLIL environment, teachers need to speak just the necessary since students are not sufficiently acquainted with the new language. For this reason, CLIL encourages collaborative work, which allows students to interact using the new language constantly and helps students to develop their speaking skills (Attard, Walter, Theodorou & Chrysanthou, 2015).

CLIL promotes Cognition skills, the third component of CLIL. Cognition involves higher-order thinking skills, which means that cognition within CLIL does not consist of transferring information from teachers to students nor memorizing information. On the contrary, CLIL cognition entails higher order thinking and leads learners to develop their own ways of understanding language and content (Coyle, 2005). Attard, Walter, Theodorou, and Chrysanthou (2015) pointed out that before the CLIL approach was introduced, teachers were traditionally helping students learn to think by confronting them to some typical questions such as the following: ‘when?’, ‘where?’, ‘which?’, ‘how many?’ and ‘who?.’ These types of questions do not require significant creativity, but emphasize

specific answers, allowing the students only learn to remember and understand information; therefore, the students develop Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). The CLIL approach, on the other hand, goes further than just concrete and specific answers and it involves more analytical and complex answers. Students who are in a CLIL lesson are encouraged to think in questions such as ‘why?’, ‘how?’ and ‘what evidence is there?’, these types of questions motivate learners to investigate and examine the new information. These kind of questions are known as Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and they promote oral communication in a meaningful way.

Finally, the Culture component completes the four main elements of CLIL. By means of this component students are encouraged to think of themselves as a part of a society. According to Attard, Walter, Theodorou and Chrysanthou (2015), CLIL teachers help learners to associate what they have learned to the ‘the real world’. In the same way, students assume the new knowledge not just like a school subject but something they can share or associate with other cultures. To sum up, the cultural component helps students first to better understand themselves and their culture. Secondly, it helps to broaden students understanding about other cultures. It, of course, makes the process of communication more effective.

The CLIL approach seems to encourage oral interaction and fluency in a meaningful and significant context producing better results in terms of communicative competence compared with the traditional foreign language teaching, where the learners take a passive role and they are less involved in the learning experience. In light of the aforementioned information, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the CLIL approach

within the high school classroom context and to evaluate its impact on English learners' oral production.

## **2. Research problem**

The current study focuses specifically on the impact of the CLIL approach in foreign language oral production in the English classroom. Authors like Ortega and Minchala (2018) mention that in our educational context, oral production becomes one of the most difficult skills to develop among FL learners. The study reveals serious problems with the productive skills: speaking and writing.

According to Bygate (1998), good oral production skills require a complex mental activity which involves several sub- skills. Additionally, the speaking skill can be influenced by many factors, such as: the target audience, feelings of anxiety, and a lack of an appropriate methodology. With regard to the last factor, traditional methodology generally focuses on skills and areas of knowledge in isolation, where generally “teacher-dominated interaction” is present (Broughton, 1994, p.). According to this author, in the traditional model the learners take a passive role and the teacher is considered the main actor in the teaching-learning process.

Within the Ecuadorian educational context, there is an evident traditional teaching model as well as an inconsistent communicative instruction related to teaching English as a foreign language, this issue has been observed mainly in public high schools (Calle et al., 2012). A study carried out by Ortega and Minchala (2018) supports the previous information, the aim of this research was to analyze the current situation of the teaching and learning of English according to the English Ecuadorian curriculum in the last year of

United General Baccalaureate (BGU). This study was carried out in eight rural educational units. A total of 272 learners and eight English teachers took part in this study. In the first place, the level of English proficiency of the BGU students was determined, which made possible to know in which language skills there are greater and lesser difficulties. Secondly, direct observations were made to identify how English is taught in classrooms. In the same way, focus groups and interviews were conducted to obtain the views of students and eight teachers on key aspects of the English subject. The general findings reflect a low level of English proficiency among the students especially in the oral linguistic competence and that to a large extent the current methodology is not in accordance with the current English curriculum. According to the authors, the direct observations have shown that the most common English teachers' method is mainly based on the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) since most of the time the teacher explained specific grammar rules and translated instructions into the students' native language. Apart from that, the researches confirmed the lack of activities that promote interaction among learners and between teachers and learners. In addition, it could be observed that during oral activities the students were just encouraged to use mostly yes/no question and short answers. Likewise, Ortega and Auccahuallpa (2018) conducted an investigation about the Ecuadorian English instruction. One the most important findings indicated that to implement innovational approaches such as CLIL becomes a challenge for most of the Ecuadorian English teachers. On the contrary, they still employ conventional methodologies as well as traditional strategies in the English classroom settings.

On the other hand, according to the new national EFL curriculum (2016), Ecuador's English language policy states that the teaching of English is mandatory for all educational

levels from primary to high school. Likewise, the current curriculum is framed within the international standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Thus, the Ecuadorian High School Exit Profile aims that all secondary graduates should be at B1 level, which implies the ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations, using a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations and dealing in a general way with non-routine information.

However, in most of the cases, high-school graduates do not reach a minimum B1 language proficiency level according to international standards (CEFR), and the development of the students' speaking skill has become one of the most difficult tasks in foreign language acquisition nationwide.

Additionally, on the basis of my professional and personal experience as an English teacher, high-school graduates face several difficulties to express themselves about topics such as family, hobbies, and interests. Moreover, most learners at this level have several lexical limitations.

Nevertheless, according to Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) an international organization, Ecuador ranks 65 of a total of 88 countries and regions around the world, this represents a low- performance level in English (Education First EPI, 2018). Another research study developed by the British Council (2015) indicated that Ecuadorian learners had an intermediate level for reading and listening and a fair level for speaking and writing. The necessity to improve the teaching and learning of English in our educational context has created the need to explore new methodologies to enhance the learners' oral production skill. To face such challenge in 2016, the new Ecuadorian English curriculum

incorporated the CLIL approach as one of its core principles. (MINEDUC, 2016). The EFL curriculum considers CLIL as a means to access and learn English in an authentic, meaningful context. Swain (1985) states that both, the contribution and the production are two essential aspects for effective language acquisition. In this way, the author suggests that the quality of learning a language is not as optimal if a student is not able to actively use the language for real-life situations inside and outside the classroom. Clearly, the CLIL approach supports the author's words since CLIL seeks not only the transmission of content but it allows learners to apply that information in a real situation. Nikula (2010) points out that as a result of the integration of topics and subjects, the students tend to enhance their speaking skills due to the large variety of vocabulary they are being exposed to in class, as well as the wide range of information they have to manage. Due to this fact, language becomes purposeful and produce genuine and spontaneous oral production.

Brown and Yule (1983) stated that to encourage students to speak in a foreign language becomes a challenge. This affirmation involves different aspects, one of them is the lack of activities that promote and stimulate oral production. However, the CLIL approach seems to encourage oral interaction and fluency in a meaningful and significant context. Dalton (2008) emphasizes the need to conduct research studies and make a contrast between the traditional educational methodology and CLIL instruction. Unfortunately, in our educational context few studies have been carried out related to the impact of CLIL approach in foreign language oral production. Consequently, there is a need to conduct and evaluate the impact of the CLIL approach in the development of high school English students' oral production.

### 3. Methodology

This section describes the process and steps that were taken to complete the present quasi –experimental research study. This study aimed to investigate the impact of the CLIL approach in foreign language oral production in second year of the Unified General Baccalaureate (BGU). In order to gather data, a quantitative method was employed, which allowed the researcher to perform statistical tests and determine the impact of the treatment. Lastly, methodological triangulation was employed in order to validate data. According to Erzberger and Kelle (2003) this term makes reference to the use of a variety of methods to collect and analyse data.

#### *3.1 Setting*

This study took place in a public educational institution in Cuenca, Ecuador. It was established in 2012. Currently, this high school has two sessions (morning – afternoon). The field research of this study was conducted in the afternoon sessions. At the present time, this institution offers the “Bachillerato General Unificado” (BGU). According to the English Ecuadorian curriculum for BGU the students are exposed to five hours per week of general English. In accordance with the Educational public system, each hour represents 40-minute class periods. Although one of the essential core principles of the English Ecuadorian curriculum is the CLIL approach, the students are not being exposed to an authentic CLIL approach since the activities are not based in the four Cs of CLIL. On the contrary, there is a greater focus on the knowledge of content than language use.

### *3.2 Participants*

This study was carried out using one class of second (BGU). The group (Class “A”) was taught through CLIL approach. At the time of the study, the average age of the participants was 16 and 17 years old. A total of 22 students took part in this study. This is a mixed gender group. All the students are from Cuenca city and their mother tongue is Spanish. Likewise, the participants have a similar socio-economic status as well as the same educational and cultural background.

#### *3.2.1 Ethical issues*

Taking into account that the participants of this study were under the age of 18, a permission of the parents was given to take part of it. In this way, an informed consent was elaborated where all the information about the process was detailed (Appendix 1).

### *3.2 Materials and Data Collection*

The field research lasted approximately three months. In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study, the following quantitative research methods were employed; a pre-test and post-test and two surveys were, one at the beginning of the study and another at the end.

The participants’ oral production was evaluated by means of the same pre-test and a post-test. These tests aimed to examine their oral performance at the beginning and at the end of the intervention and the results were compared in light of the implementation of CLIL lessons. This instrument was based on Cambridge B1 preliminary speaking test that is designed according to the CEFR. (Appendix 2). The speaking test format lasted around



eight minutes for each pair of students. The test contained tasks such as: asking and answering questions, talking about likes and dislikes, and describing pictures. These tests were recorded and conducted by the researcher. Likewise, the test results were compared with the purpose of evaluating the effect of the CLIL approach on the participants' second language oral production.

To analyze students' oral production in depth both the pre-test and the post-test were elaborated taking into account basic criteria: pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, interaction and comprehension. These criteria was marked from one to ten points. The scoring sheet indicates a rating scale where 9 to 10 represents "excellent", 7 - 8 "very good", 5 - 6 "good", 3 - 4 "fair", 1 - 2 "poor" (Appendix 3). The rubric employed was adapted from Villalba (2014) and it examines in detail each parameter: comprehension (ability to understand questions and respond appropriately), interaction (ability to listen to and interact with a partner), accuracy (grammar, syntax, and general structures), fluency (vocabulary, speed, naturalness, lack of hesitation), and pronunciation (stress, rhythm, intonation patters) (Appendix 4).

During the eight weeks of this study, the students were exposed to CLIL lesson plans based on the four components of the approach. In order to provide learners with effective CLIL classroom instruction, one lesson plan was designed for two sessions. Each lesson plan was based on a model suggested by Coyle (2005); according to this author, CLIL lesson plans will be successful if all their four components are combined. As it was mentioned before, these four principles are essential to the CLIL approach. They were used as the framework for creating and delivering successful lessons.

Lastly, two surveys were administered to the students, one at the beginning of the study and another at the end (Appendix 5). Both surveys contained the same questions. The surveys were addressed to obtain students' general perceptions about traditional methods of teaching, their attitude toward the new approach implemented into classroom instruction, and the interest about the foreign language acquisition. In order to have a clear and understandable survey it was written in Spanish which is the students' mother tongue. A Likert scale was used to scaling responses in the surveys or simple "yes or no". The survey consisted of two parts. In the first part, there were questions regarding learners' general opinions of teaching English as a foreign language. The second part was related to content subjects being taught in English.

#### **4. Data analysis**

The results were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS 22 and descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. In the descriptive analysis, Means ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard deviations (SD) were used to express each sub skill evaluated. To compare the initial situation to the final situation, it was proved that the differences do not have normal distribution (Table 1). Therefore, Wilcoxon, a non-parametric test, was used to find the probability (Significance or sig.) of the hypothesis of the differences between the pre-test and the post-test (Field, 2013). In order to know the impact of the applied program in the students, a descriptive statistic test called Cohen's d effect size was used. The values can be expressed in different levels, when it is around 0.01 it means very small, 0.20 means Small, 0.50 means Medium, 0.80 means Large, 1.20 means Very large, and 2.0 means Huge (Sawilowsky, 2009). Lastly, Cronbach's Alpha, a coefficient of reliability, was calculated

in order to measure the reliability of a scale of 9 items about the student's opinions of the learning process (Cho, 2016).

Table 1: **Distribution test of the differences of the skills values**

<b>Normal distribution test</b>						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Difference of comprehension	.343	22	.000	.794	22	.000
Difference of Interaction	.346	22	.000	.793	22	.000
Difference of Accuracy	.249	22	.001	.863	22	.006
Difference of Fluency	.300	22	.000	.793	22	.000
Difference of Pronunciation	.273	22	.000	.884	22	.014
Difference of Total	.249	22	.001	.823	22	.001

a. Lilliefors' significance corrections

## 5. Results

Regarding the overall performance of the students, after the CLIL intervention there was an improvement in participants' oral production. In order to analyze the data gathered through the applied pre-test and post-test, it was necessary to make a comparison between them.

### Pre-test

Table 2 shows the results of the pre-test before the intervention, all of the sub-skills were evaluated over 10 points. In this way, the level of comprehension is 4.46 points (SD = 1.84), which according to the scoring sheet is equivalent to a fair and good level. It becomes the highest value within the pre-test. On the other hand, both Interaction (SD = 1.72) and Accuracy (SD = 1.19) obtained 2.91 points, and they were the lowest values of the pre-test which corresponds to a fair level. Fluency reached 3.00 points (SD = 1.72 points) that represents a fair level while the sub-skill Pronunciation obtained 4.00 points (SD = 1.51 points). Finally, the sum of all the sub skills gave a total of 17.27 points (SD = 7.05 points).

**Table 2: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard deviation (SD) of the pre-test.**

	( $\bar{X}$ )	SD
<b>Comprehension</b>	4.46	1.84
<b>Interaction</b>	2.91	1.72
<b>Accuracy</b>	2.91	1.19
<b>Fluency</b>	3.00	1.72
<b>Pronunciation</b>	4.00	1.51
<b>Total</b>	17.27	7.05

### Post-test

Table 3 shows the results of the post-test over 10 points in each sub-skill. The Comprehension sub-skill obtained 6.36 points (SD = 1.18), which according to the scoring sheet represents a good level. This sub skill obtained the highest value within the post-test. On the other hand, Interaction obtained 4.18 points (SD = 1.37), which is equivalent to a

fair level. Accuracy reached 4.27 points (SD = 1.28) equivalent to fair level. It is important to mention that this is considered as the lowest value of the post-test. Fluency obtained a value of 4.91 points (SD = 1.48) which represents a good level. Pronunciation obtained 6.00 points (SD = 1.38) which means a good level. The total sum was 24.91 points (SD = 4.08) which is equivalent to a good general performance.

Table 3: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard deviation (SD) of the post-test.

	$\bar{X}$	SD
<b>Comprehension</b>	6.36	1.18
<b>Interaction</b>	4.18	1.37
<b>Accuracy</b>	4.27	1.28
<b>Fluency</b>	4.91	1.48
<b>Pronunciation</b>	6.00	1.38
<b>Total</b>	24.91	4.08

#### Differences between pre and post-test

Table 4 shows the differences between the pre-test and the post-test. As we can observe, the learners had a better performance in the final evaluation compared with the initial evaluation.

Table 4: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard deviation (SD) of the differences between the pretest and posttest.

	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference		Sig.
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	

<b>Comprehension</b>	4.46	1.84	6.36	1.18	1.91	1.44	0.000*
<b>Interaction</b>	2.91	1.72	4.18	1.37	1.27	1.32	0.001*
<b>Accuracy</b>	2.91	1.19	4.27	1.28	1.36	1.56	0.002*
<b>Fluency</b>	3.00	1.72	4.91	1.48	1.91	1.31	0.000*
<b>Pronunciation</b>	4.00	1.51	6.00	1.38	2.00	1.75	0.000*
<b>Total</b>	17.27	7.05	24.91	4.08	7.64	5.81	0.000*

\*There is a significant difference between pretest and posttest since the significance is less than 0.05 (Sig.<0.05).

It is worth noticing that there are significant changes in the students' speaking tests before and after the CLIL intervention. The results showed that at the end of the intervention, there was a significant progress in each sub-skill. The students improved in the accuracy and fluency sub skills. According to the researcher, the students felt more motivated because of the implementation of the new CLIL strategies. Within CLIL lessons, the learners were asked to complete the tasks focusing on both fluency and accuracy. On the contrary, in the traditional EFL instruction the students used the target language just in a communicative manner leaving aside language mistakes. It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of the intervention students were resistant to use the target language. However, throughout the course they became familiar with the new approach and started to use the target language effectively.

Regarding interaction, the analysis results show a difference of 1.27 points (SD=1.32 points), which means a significance increase ( $z=-3.300$ ; 0.001) with a large effect size according to the Cohen's d test. According to the teacher, the collaborative nature of

CLIL activities promoted interaction. In the majority of the CLIL tasks, students had the opportunity to use the language successfully.

As it was observed in table 4, the pronunciation sub-skill reveals an increase of 2 points ( $SD= 1.75$  points), which means a significant difference ( $z=-3.581$ ;  $P=0.000$ ) with a medium effect size ( $d=0.52$  points). Pronunciation is an important part of speaking a foreign language, and as a result of the CLIL intervention students had to manage a variety range of vocabulary regarding different subjects since CLIL incorporate subject-specific-vocabulary in lessons. It gave the researcher the opportunity to check students' pronunciation by means of teacher or peer to peer feedback which fostered oral pronunciation. In the same way, comprehension has a considerable increase with a large effect size according to the Cohen's  $d$  test ( $d=1.31$ ). Because of the integration of the four CLIL components: communication, content, cognition and culture, students tend to develop higher order thinking skills which gave them a better understanding of the second language. Finally, the sum of each sub-skill has a significant total difference of 7.64 points ( $z=-3.703$ ;  $P=0.000$ ); it implies a very large effect size ( $d=1.31$  points).

With respect to the survey, the study participants expressed positive opinions about English language learning and the CLIL approach. The responses were measured by means of a Likert scale of 9 items (Table 5). To evaluate the reliability of this instrument, a Cronbach's Alfa was calculated obtaining a very good level of 0.834. All the items shown an improvement, the students changed their initial opinion regarding to the final opinion. Students reported the highest increase in the question 5, about whether they like to learn English related to other subjects, from 9.1% to 90.9%. This item is related to item 7 which

asks about the student's feelings on learning math and history through another language, from 4.5% to 77.3%.

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of the opinions questions of learning English as a foreign language

	Pretest		Posttest	
	n	%	n	%
1. ¿Cuánto disfrutas estudiar el idioma inglés?	8	36.4	20	90.9
2. ¿Es importante aprender otro lenguaje?	19	86.4	21	95.5
3. ¿Es tu clase de inglés difícil?	11	50.0	6	27.3
4. ¿Tratas de usar el inglés fuera del aula?	2	9.1	10	45.5
5. ¿Te gustaría estudiar el lenguaje inglés con otras áreas?	2	9.1	20	90.9
6. ¿Sientes seguridad al hablar inglés con otras personas?	2	9.1	15	68.2
7. ¿Te sentirías seguro aprendiendo contenidos, tales como: matemáticas e historia a través de otro lenguaje?	1	4.5	17	77.3
8. ¿Piensas que enseñar lenguaje y contenido al mismo tiempo, es una manera efectiva de aprender un lenguaje?	4	18.2	18	81.8
9. ¿Piensas que enseñar lenguaje y contenido al mismo tiempo es una manera efectiva de aprender contenido?	5	22.7	16	72.7

**Note:** The scale answer options were from 1 to 4 points, 1=nothing, 2=little, 3=enough, and 4=very much.

The results of Table 6, with respect to item 1 “*Which skill is the hardest to develop?*” the largest group selected the option *speaking* in the initial survey which represents 60.9%. On the other hand, a 31.8% maintain their opinion in the final survey. Regarding item 2 “*Are you learning English in a traditional way?* “ at the beginning, almost all the students (90.9%) agree that they were learning English in a traditional manner, but at the end of the intervention learners changed their opinions and they considered that they were not learning English language in a traditional way. Finally, for the item 3 “*Do you know about the CLIL method?*” in the initial survey 100% of the surveyed students didn't have any knowledge about the CLIL approach. On the contrary, in



the final survey, it was confirmed that all the students became familiar with the new approach.

Table 6: Frequencies and percentages of the opinion questions

		Pretest		Posttest	
		n	%	n	%
Which skill is the hardest to develop?	Reading	2	9.1	2	9.1
	Writing	2	9.1	5	27.3
	Speaking	12	60.9	7	31.8
	Listening	6	21.2	8	30.0
Are you learning English in a traditional way?	Yes	20	90.9	1	4.5
	No	2	9.1	21	95.5
Do you know about the CLIL method?	Yes	0		22	100.0
	No	22	100.0	0	

In conclusion, each item in the questionnaire was examined to understand the opinions of the students about English language learning and the CLIL approach. In summary, the learners have positive opinions about learning English language and learning content in an additional language. In addition, before the intervention, students expressed that they had been learning English in a traditional manner, where generally teacher-dominated interaction and students take a passive role in the teaching process (Broughton, 1994). On the other hand, after the intervention the students reported they learned English in a non-traditional manner, which seeks not only the transmission of content but it allows learners to apply that information in a real situation Nikula (2010).

## 6. Discussion

After analyzing data, the results of the pre-test showed an improvement regarding students' oral production in all these categories: Comprehension, Interaction, Accuracy,

Fluency, and Pronunciation. Thus, the CLIL approach fosters students' general oral production.

These results are consistent with the findings of Naves (2010) who revealed that within the CLIL approach it exists the required conditions to develop the target language in a natural way; this characteristic focuses on both content and language simultaneously.

At the end of the intervention, it could be noted that students got better scores in their oral production due to an authentic CLIL exposure. During the planning stage, learners were taught through lesson plans based on the four components of the new model (communication, content, culture and cognition) which was in line with Coyle's views (2005) who states that CLIL lesson plans will be successful if all their four components are combined.

The findings of this study are also in line with Attard, Walter, Theodorou and Chrysanthou (2015) who mention that CLIL promotes collaborative work and allow the practice of the language through interaction. As it was mentioned before, one of the components of CLIL is communication, which emphasizes the idea that learning a language is supported by interaction. The traditional teaching context is based on a unilateral transmission of knowledge from teachers to passive learners. On the contrary, within CLIL, students and teachers interact most of the time which helps to develop speaking skills.

According to the findings of this study, CLIL is a positive approach that promotes oral production significantly. This affirmation is supported by Nikula (2010) who states that as a result of the integration of topics and subjects the language learners tend to

enhance their speaking skills due to the large variety of vocabulary they are being exposed to in class, as well as the huge range of information they have to manage.

## **7. Conclusions**

The general findings of this study demonstrate that CLIL becomes a positive alternative in the development of English learners' oral production as opposed to the traditional Ecuadorian EFL lessons. According to the results, the CLIL approach seems to encourage oral interaction in a meaningful and significant context; these findings are in line with a wide range of studies which confirm the effectiveness of CLIL programs as an innovative teaching methodology (Dalton, 2008; Zafiri, 2016; Merino & Lasagabaster, 2017; Nikula, 2010; Gallardo & Gómez, 2013).

With respect to the effect of CLIL on learners' oral production after CLIL intervention significant differences were found. The results of the post-test indicated a much better performance in all the tasks of the speaking test. Additionally, the study participants demonstrate a significant improvement in all the categories of the test which included: comprehension, interaction, accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation.

To conclude, the information collected by the surveys revealed a great enthusiasm and interest for learning English through CLIL. Almost all of the study participants agreed that the CLIL approach can help them to develop second language oral production compared with traditional language teaching methodology that is commonly centered on a unilateral transmission of knowledge from teachers to passive learners.

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**Appendix 1: Consentimiento de Participación - Estudio de Investigación.****UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA, Cuenca, Ecuador****Título del estudio:**

Efectos del Enfoque CLIL en la Producción Oral de Estudiantes de Inglés en el Segundo Año de Bachillerato General Unificado en una Escuela Secundaria en Cuenca, Ecuador

**Investigador:**

*Jhonny V. Benalcazar, Investigador Principal – UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA.*

**Introducción**

- Se solicita de la manera más comedida autorizar a su representado/a ser parte del trabajo de investigación educativo sobre el efecto del método CLIL en la producción oral del segundo lenguaje en segundo año de bachillerato de la Unidad Educativa Víctor Gerardo Aguilar. El trabajo de investigación fue aprobado por la Coordinación de Investigación de la universidad de Cuenca y cuenta con el respaldo de la máxima autoridad de la institución educativa.
- Su representado/a fue seleccionado/a como un/a participante potencial para este estudio por ser actualmente estudiante de inglés del segundo año de bachillerato en esta institución educativa.
- Solicito leer este documento cuidadosamente antes que autorice a su representado/a ser parte de este proyecto de investigación.

**Propósito del Estudio**

- El objetivo de este trabajo es investigar en qué medida la implementación del método CLIL promueve la producción oral en los estudiantes del segundo año de bachillerato de la Unidad Educativa Víctor Gerardo Aguilar en Cuenca. Los resultados de esta investigación serán difundidos mediante ponencias y artículos científicos. .

**Descripción Básica de Procedimientos de Investigación**

- Si usted está de acuerdo en autorizar que su representado/a participe en este estudio, su representado/a podría completar un test de inglés, ser observado en clases, y ser entrevistado. La participación de su representado en la presente investigación **no afectará de ninguna manera el promedio de la asignatura de Inglés ni tampoco los contenidos ya establecidos durante todo el año lectivo 2018-2019.**



### **Riesgos (o Incomodidades) por Participar en la Investigación.**

- La investigación no tiene ningún tipo de riesgos o no pretende causar ningún tipo de incomodidades entre los participantes. Este estudio no acarrea aspectos bioéticos para los participantes, quienes no serán vulnerados o puestos en riesgo en ninguna etapa de la investigación. Es decir, los participantes como los investigadores no serán objeto de ningún tipo de intervención que incluya procesos que puedan afectar su bienestar físico o psicológico.

### **Derecho a Rechazar o Retirarse de la Investigación**

- La decisión de participar en esta investigación es voluntaria. Usted puede oponerse a que su representado/a participe en este estudio en cualquier momento sin afectar su relación con los investigadores de este estudio o de la institución educativa. Finalmente, tiene derecho a solicitar a los investigadores que no utilicen la información obtenida a través del test de inglés, las observaciones áulicas y entrevistas en los medios de difusión de los resultados de investigación planificados.

### **Consentimiento**

- Su firma abajo indica que usted ha aceptado voluntariamente que su representado/a participe en la investigación y que ha leído y entendido la información proporcionada en este documento. Posteriormente, se le entregará una copia firmada y con fecha de este documento.

Nombre del o de la  
participante/ estudiante  
(por favor escriba aquí el  
nombre completo):

---

\*Firma del o de la  
participante/ estudiante  
en caso que *sea mayor*  
*de edad*:

Fecha:

---

---

\*Firma del o de la  
representante en caso  
que el participante/  
estudiante *sea menor de*  
*edad*:

Fecha:

---

---

\*Firma del Director del

---

---



Proyecto:

---

---

Fecha:

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## Appendix 2: Speaking Pre and Post-Test

### SPEAKING TEST

During the test there will be an interlocutor and two candidates (candidate A and candidate B). This test will contain four tasks which are described below.

Part 1 (2 minutes)

<p>Phase 1</p> <p>Interlocutor</p> <p>A/B Good morning / afternoon</p> <p>A/B I'm ..... and this is ..... He / she is just going to listen to us.</p> <p>A Now, what's your name?</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>B And what's your name?</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>B Candidate B, what's your surname? How do you spell it?</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>A And, Candidate A, what's your surname? How do you spell it?</p> <p>Thank you</p>	
<p><b>Ask the following questions.</b></p> <p><b>(Candidate A first)</b></p> <p>A Where do you live / come from?</p> <p>A Do you study English at school?</p> <p>Do you like it?</p> <p><b>(Repeat for Candidate B.)</b></p>	<p><b>Back-up prompts</b></p> <p>Do you live in ...?</p> <p>Do you have English lessons?</p>



<p>Phase 2</p> <p><b>Interlocutor (Select one or more questions from the list to ask each candidate. Use candidates' names throughout. Ask Candidate B first.)</b></p> <p>Do you enjoy studying English? Why (not)?</p> <p>Do you think that English will be useful for you in the future?</p> <p>What did you do yesterday evening / last weekend?</p> <p>What do you enjoy doing in your free time?</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	<p><b>Back-up prompts</b></p> <p>Do you like studying English?</p> <p>Will you use English in the future?</p> <p>Did you do anything yesterday evening / last weekend? What?</p> <p>What do you like to do in your free time?</p>
---	---



Part 2. (2 minutes) In the next part, you are going to talk to each other. I'm going to describe a situation to you.

You won a prize to visit a city in Ecuador. You're going to travel together for one week. Talk together about where you would like to go and decide which activities would you like to do in that city.

**Here is a picture with some ideas to help you. Just think for a few seconds.**

I'll say that again.

You won a prize to visit a city in Ecuador. You're going to travel together for one week. Talk together about where you would like to go and decide which activities would you like to do in that city.

**All right? Talk together**

Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention.

## Pictures for part 2





Part 3. (2 minutes) In the next part examiner say to both candidates.

**Now, I'd like each of you to talk on your own about something. I'm going to give each of you a photograph of people doing things at home.**

Candidate A, here is your photograph. Please show it to Candidate B, but I'd like you to talk about it. Candidate B, you just listen. Candidate A, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Approximately one minute)

Now, Candidate B, here is your photograph. It also shows people doing things at home. Please show it to Candidate A and tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Approximately one minute)

Part 4 (2 minutes) in the next part examiner say to both candidates.

**Your photographs showed people doing things at home. Now I'd like you to talk together about the things you have to do at home and the things you like doing at home.**

(Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary).

**Back-up Prompts**

1. Talk about the things you have to do at home.
2. Talk about the things you like doing at home.



3. Talk about your favorite room in your home.
4. Talk about inviting friends to your home.

### **Pictures for activity 3 and 4**

#### **Candidate A**



#### **Candidate B**





### Appendix 3: (Pre-test and Post-test) Scoring Sheet

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Poor 1-2	Fair 3-4	Good 5-6	Very Good 7-8	Excellent 9-10
<b>Comprehension</b> (ability to understand questions and respond appropriately)					
<b>Interaction</b> (ability to listen to and interact with a partner)					
<b>Accuracy</b> (grammar, syntax, and general structures)					
<b>Fluency</b> (vocabulary, speed, naturalness, lack of hesitation)					
<b>Pronunciation</b> (stress, rhythm, intonation patterns)					
Total: ..... out of 50.					
Comments and suggestions: ..... .....					

Adapted from Villalba (2012)



	Poor 1-2	Fair 3-4	Good 5-6	Very good 7-8	Excellent 9-10
Makes her/himself understood while performing most of the task; listener rarely asks for repetition or clarification.	Unable to make her/himself understood while performing the task <sub>1</sub> , even when listener asks for repetition or clarification. Unable to make her/himself understood while performing the task <sub>1</sub> , even when listener asks for repetition or clarification.	Unable to make her/himself understood while performing most of the task; listener frequently asks for repetition and clarification.	Makes her/himself understood while performing at least half the task; listener sometimes asks for repetition or clarification.	Makes her/himself understood while performing most of the task; listener seldom asks for repetition or clarification.	Makes her/himself understood while performing most of the task; listener rarely asks for repetition or clarification.
Interaction ability to listen to and interact with a partner	Unable to listen attentively or respond appropriately while performing the task; fails to interact with a partner.	Unable to listen attentively or respond appropriately while performing most of the task; interacts poorly with a partner.	While performing at least half of the task, listens to another person and responds reasonably well; interacts adequately with a partner.	While performing most of the task, listens attentively to another person and responds appropriately; interacts well with a partner	While performing the task, listens attentively to another person and responds appropriately; interacts very well with a partner
Accuracy grammar, syntax, and general structures	Uncontrolled grammar and syntax, lacks knowledge of general structures.	Very frequent errors; difficulty in making meaning clear.	Frequent errors; meaning is not always clear.	Quite accurate; some errors, but meaning is clear.	Grammatical and lexical accuracy are high.
Fluency vocabulary, speed, naturalness, lack of hesitation	Unnatural and labored speech, extremely hesitant on even high-frequency vocabulary words, phrases and structures.	Hesitant; very limited range of language available.	Quite hesitant; limited range of vocabulary and structures.	Some hesitation and sometimes has to search for words.	Speaks fluently without hesitation or searching for words.
Pronunciation stress, rhythm, intonation patterns	Lots of errors; unclear articulation and intonation, which makes speech almost unintelligible.	Very frequent errors; often very difficult to understand.	Frequent errors; not always clear enough to understand.	Generally clear; reasonable control of stress and intonation.	Very clear; stress and intonation help to make meaning clear.

#### Appendix 4: Evaluation Rubric

Adapted from Villalba (2012).

**Appendix 5: Survey****Encuesta N° 1**

Por favor responda todas las preguntas con honestidad. Esta encuesta será manejada confidencialmente.

<b>Ítems</b>	<b>1. Nada</b>	<b>2. Poco</b>	<b>3. Bastante</b>	<b>4. Mucho</b>
1. ¿Cuánto disfrutas estudiar el idioma inglés?				
2. ¿Es importante aprender otro lenguaje?				
3. ¿Es tu clase de inglés difícil?				
4. ¿Tratas de usar el inglés fuera del aula?				
5. ¿Te gustaría estudiar el lenguaje inglés con otras áreas?				
6. ¿Sientes seguridad al hablar inglés con otras personas?				
7. ¿Te sentirías seguro aprendiendo contenidos, tales como: matemáticas e historia a través de otro lenguaje?				
8. ¿Piensas que enseñar lenguaje y contenido al mismo tiempo, es una manera efectiva de aprender un lenguaje?				
9. ¿Piensas que enseñar lenguaje y contenido al mismo tiempo es una manera efectiva de aprender contenido?				

Adapted from Cross & Gearon (2013) and Aguilar & Santacruz (2016)



10. ¿Cuál es la destreza más difícil de desarrollar en el idioma inglés?

Leer \_\_\_\_\_

Escribir \_\_\_\_\_

Hablar \_\_\_\_\_

Escuchar \_\_\_\_\_

11. ¿Piensas que estas aprendiendo inglés de una manera natural o de una manera tradicional?

Si \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

12. ¿Conoces acerca del método CLIL?

Si \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from Cross & Gearon (2013) and Aguilar & Santacruz (2016)